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Daily Highlights

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F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

- Secretary-General meets with United Nations staff in Benin; stresses need to reinforce cooperation between different components of United Nations system.

- In message for World AIDS Day, Secretary-General says Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS will strengthen national capacities to respond to pandemic.

- Secretary-General welcomes appointment of Spanish Foreign Minister Javier Solana as Secretary-General of NATO and Chairman of North Atlantic Council.

- General Assembly authorizes almost $19 million for UNDOF for period 1 December 1995 to 30 June 1996; begins debate on situation in Middle East.

- Donors pledge more than $37 million for 1996 programmes of Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in Near East.

- Administrative and Budgetary Committee recommends General Assembly authorize $126 million for peace-keeping operations in former Yugoslavia and Haiti.

- Global treaty to regulate fishing on high seas to be opened for signature on Monday at special meeting of Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks.

- Fred Eckhard is appointed Focal Point for contacts with delegations in Department of Peace-keeping Operations.

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Continuing his visit to Benin, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met today with United Nations representatives and staff in Cotonou. In an address, he underlined the importance of reinforcing cooperation between the different components of the United Nations system. Tomorrow, he will address the opening ceremony of the Sixth Francophone Summit.

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The new Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UN-AIDS) will strengthen national capacities to respond to the pandemic, according to the Secretary-General. In a message on the occasion of World AIDS Day, he said the dangers and dimensions of the disease had yet to be fully grasped in many vulnerable parts of the world.

The Secretary-General noted that the United Nations was mandated to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of a social and humanitarian nature. UN-AIDS reflected that purpose and mission. It would bring together the skills, experience and expertise of the World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

"In my very first report as Secretary-General to the General Assembly, in 1992, I stressed that the United Nations must become an Organization which views social cooperation with the same sense of responsibility and urgency as political and security commitments," he said. "It must take full advantage of the central coordinating capacity available to it on humanitarian issues. It must be an Organization whose operational strength supports its policy objectives. UN-AIDS gives expression to that resolve."

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The Secretary-General today welcomed the appointment of Spanish Foreign Minister Javier Solana as Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Chairman of the North Atlantic Council. He said he looked forward to continuing the relationship of close cooperation that existed between the two Organizations.

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The General Assembly today authorized up to $18.8 million gross ($18.2 million net) for the United Nations Disengagement Force (UNDOF) on the Syrian Golan Heights for the period 1 December 1995 to 30 June 1996. It also allocated to UNDOF $16.1 million gross ($15.6 million net) that had previously been authorized and apportioned for the period 1 June to 30 November 1995.

The Assembly also began its debate on the situation in the Middle East, and three draft resolutions were introduced. By one draft, the Assembly would welcome the peace process and stress the need for rapid progress on the other tracks of the Arab-Israeli negotiations. Another draft would have the Assembly determine that Israel's decision to impose its laws and administration on Jerusalem was illegal and had no validity. By the third draft, the Assembly would demand that Israel withdraw from all the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967.

The representative of Israel invited Syria and Lebanon to stop hesitating and understand that through negotiations, peace could be achieved. Both needed peace as much as Israel and the rest of the Middle East, as that would promote security and development, he said.

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Pledges worth more than $37 million were announced yesterday for the 1996 programmes of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) at a meeting of the General Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee for the Announcement of Voluntary Contributions to UNRWA. Announcements of contributions and support were made by representatives of 25 countries, as well as by the observers of the Holy See and Switzerland. The largest pledges were made by Norway ($11 million), Netherlands ($7.6 million), Germany ($7 million) and Switzerland ($4 million).

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The General Assembly would authorize $126 million gross for varying periods this month for peace-keeping operations in the former Yugoslavia and Haiti, should it adopt two draft decisions approved by the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary).

The Assembly would authorize $115.4 million gross ($113.9 million net) for the period 1 to 31 December 1995 for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO), the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) and the United Nations Peace Forces (UNPF) headquarters. It would also authorize $10.6 million gross ($10.4 million net) for the period 1 to 15 December 1995 for the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH). Both decisions would be taken on exceptional bases.

The Security Council yesterday extended the mandates of the three peace-keeping operations in the former Yugoslavia. UNCRO's mandate will terminate after an interim period ending on 25 January 1996 or when the Council has decided on the deployment of a transitional peace-keeping force, whichever is sooner. UNPROFOR was extended for a two-month period until 31 January 1996, and UNPREDEP for a six-month period until 30 May 1996.

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A global treaty to regulate fishing on the high seas will be opened for signature on Monday at a special meeting of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. The Agreement will for the first time bind States to conserve and sustainably manage high-seas fisheries and to settle fishing disputes peacefully.

The treaty is titled the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions

of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. Adopted by the Conference on 4 August, it includes ground-breaking provisions to ensure compatible conservation and management measures between high-seas areas and coastal zones under national jurisdiction. A major feature of the treaty is its "precautionary approach", by which States are obligated to act conservatively when there is doubt about the viability of stocks.

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Fred Eckhard has left the Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General to take up a new assignment in the Department of Peace-keeping Operations. As of today, Mr. Eckhard will be the Focal Point for contacts with delegations.

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